13. APPLE SEED
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS. BUT WOW!
:klik: TERMINAL READY: DISPLAY.
:klik:
?!
HEY! GAIA'S SHOWING US HOW MANY HELIOSTATS ARE IN USE, EFFECTIVENESS PROJECTIONS... AND A COUNTDOWN TO THE EXPLOSION!!
THE VARIABLES KEEP CHANGING, BUT THE COUNTDOWN'S STILL RUNNING!

DOES GAIA ALWAYS PROVIDE SUCH HELPFUL INFOR-MATION?
DEUNAN!
GAIA SAYS: "FACTORING IN VARIATIONS IN INCLINATION, EDUCATIONAL BIAS, ETCETERA, GAIA DISCUSSES DATA AMONG INDIVIDUAL COMPUTER UNITS. CONCLUSIONS EQUAL PROPOSALS
HE TALK DURING OR STU FID
"GAIA HAS NO DESIRES. GAIA HAS ONLY CONCLUSIONS"
BUT RELYING ON MACHINES AND LOGIC ALONE HAS ITS FAULTS, TOO. IS IT REALLY THE BIOROIDS WHO ARE DANGER-OUS...
...OR IS IT ACTUALLY YOU WE SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT, GAIA?
OKAY.. ALL CLEAR. WE'LL TAKE THE NEXT DOOR.
IF WE STOP GAIA NOW, THERE'LL BE NO MORE CHECKS AND BALANCES ON THE BIOROIDS
BUT IF WE DON'T, WE'LL BE BACK TO THE PRE-WAR DAYS AGAIN. ARUGESS SAID THERE'S A THIRD ROAD, BUT I DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT IT MIGHT BE--

NO!!
SKRASH
SKRAK
EEEK!
SHINK

BLAM
BLAM
?
KANG
SPAK
KACH
SPRAKK

PUNCH
Uhnn...
DEUNAN!
YOSHI, DID YOU NOTICE? ALL THE RED WIRES ARE WARM
BEEP!
AND THE FEEDBACK CIRCUITS ARE FULL OF BRANCHES
ISN'T THERE A MARKER FOR THE JUNCTIONS ANYWHERE?
.....
?
KLIK
I DON'T KNOW ... MAYBE ....
KLIK
KLIK

HOW... HOW DID WE GET ALL THIS TRAINING? ARE WE STILL IN BADSIDE?
WHERE ARE WE? THIS ISN'T A SWAT ASSAULT!!
I CAN'T STAND IT! WE'RE JUST KILLERS!!
DELINAN! LISTEN TO ME!
GAIA ISN'T THE PROBLEM.. SHE PROTECTS EVERYTHING HUMAN -- THE BAD ALONG WITH THE GOOD! OUR REAL ENEMY IS THE PRESSURES THAT DRIVE US TO BAD DECISIONS AND KEEP US FROM USING HER CORRECTLY!
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, GAIA CAN BE A WEAPON AGAINST US! SHE TAKES NO SIDES, SO SHE CAN SERVE ANYBODY!
THIS MAY BE OUR ONLY CHANCE TO SHOW THAT WE CONTROL OUR DESTINY, NOT HER!
THERE'S NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT SWAT ASSAULT!
AND IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE JUDGEMENT OF THE POINT MAN! YOUR JUDGEMENT!!

KANG
HNNG!
!
Dr ASIMOV MUST BE ROLLING OVER IN HIS GRAVE...

BKG
!
SKRASH
SWIPE!
HEY, WATCH IT!
YEAH .
TIME FOR THE BIG FINISH!
WELL, THEN! GUESS WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE FIRE SUPPORT, DO WE? TIME TO TRANSFER TO THE BOMB SQUAD!
ARE YOU LISTENING, GAIA?
TRYING TO PROTECT THE CLOUDS FROM THE WINDS OF CHANGE, KOTUS? IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY ARMY, AND IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU, TOO.

HAVE YOU FOUND THE SUBSYSTEM RUNNING THE HELIOSTATS ?
UP HERE !
IT'S THE 48th CABLE OVER, COUNTING FROM THE RIGHT.
CHAK
CAN'T SEE IT THAT WELL ... DAMN, LOOK, WE'LL DO THIS SYNCHRO··YOU "LOOK" AT THE TARGET ALONG WITH ME.
EEK!
OKAY... umm. SHOOT THAT CABLE FIRST.
THE ONE WITH THE GREEN ARROW, RIGHT?
BLAK
?
DEUNAN, YOU BETTER GET A GUN READY
THAT LAST FIGHT... MY FINGERS ARE GOING NUMB.
OKAY·· NEXT?

THE REGULAR HELIOSTAT CONTROL LINE AND THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT GAIA'S NOW USING BOTH RUN OVER THERE, BUT..
BUT WHAT? SHOOT THEM, NOW!
JUST WAIT!
KR
DANGER!
BEFORE THAT, WE BETTER CHECK BEHIND THIS PANEL HERE, COULD YOU--
AND ?
KANGG
EEK!
DAMN IT--I THOUGHT SO! MORE BACKUP CIRCUITS!
AND ONE OF THEM'S ALREADY LOCKED IN.
DO WE HAVE TO BUST THAT MIDDLE ONE BEFORE TAKING OUT THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT?
HOLD IT..
IF WE JUST SMASH IT, I THINK THAT WOULD CAUSE GAIA TO LOCK THE HELIOSTATS INTO PLACE VIA THE EMERGENCY BYPASS AND JUST SHUT DOWN THE CIRCUIT HERE SHE'D GIVE THE NEW ROUTINGS PRIORITY OVER THE REGULAR CIRCUITS. SEE?

SO .WE WANT TO KEEP THE BACKUP CIRCUIT FROM KICKING IN *WITHOUT* ACTUALLY BREAKING IT, AND *THEN* CUT THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT? THAT'S A PAIN...
NO KIDDING.
I THINK WE CAN ASSUME THE HELIOSTATS NORMALLY FUNCTION AUTOMATICALLY AND INVOLUNTARILY, LIKE HUMAN ORGANS.
YOSHI! WE'VE ONLY GOT FOUR MINUTES AND TWENTY-THREE SECONDS LEFT! *HURRY!!*
SIXTEEN FEET IN FROM THE HATCH, *huh?* THAT'S A TOUGH ONE...
Gee... WHY DON'T I JUST CRAWL IN AND STUFF SOMETHING INTO IT?
IDIOT! GET *OUT* OF THERE!
IT'S SUPERCOOLED TO 450° BELOW--IT'LL FREEZE THE SKIN RIGHT *OFF* YOU!
DEUNAN GIVE ME SOME HOLLOW-POINT ROUNDS.
BUT..
BUT *BRIAREOS*
HITOMI, THERE SHOULD BE AN APPLE IN MY JACKET POCKET-- DIG OUT A COUPLE OF SEEDS.
IT'S PROBABLY ALL SMASHED
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
WE'RE GOING TO PLUG THE BACKUP CIRCUIT CONNECTOR HOLE
WITH A *BULLET?!* YOU'LL JUST SMASH IT TO BITS!
Never THESE ARE MAGNUMS
NO... I'M GOING TO TAKE OUT MOST OF THE POWDER --LEAVE JUST ENOUGH SO THE BULLET CAN CLEAR THE BARREL.
COULD YOU MANUALLY ADJUST MY MAIN LENS? IT HASN'T WORKED RIGHT SINCE THE FIGHT. THANKS.

OKAY, TRY IT NOW. STILL TOO MUCH POWDER, I THINK...
DOESN'T FEEL LIKE MUCH!
BAM
IS THAT OKAY?
THAT'S IT.
I DIDN'T THINK APPLE SEEDS WERE ROUND... DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS WILL WORK?
THEY'RE ROUND NOW BECAUSE OF GENETIC ENGINEERING. AND IF YOU'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA...!
DON'T BE A DUD, BABY!
OKAY... HERE WE GO.
TWO MINUTES 40 SECONDS!
THE THIRD ROUND'S THE REAL ONE-- SIGHT IN WITH THE FIRST TWO, YOSHI! SHOW ME THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT!
W-WAIT...
WAIT!!
IT'S NOT SUCH A HARD SHOT, REALLY...
?

A SHOT THAT CHANGES HISTORY. THERE'S BEEN A FEW MAYBE THIS IS ONE OF THEM.
BRIAREOS! SHOULD WE *REALLY* BE DOING THIS?
IS GAIA REALLY WRONG ?!
IF IT WAS MY CHOICE, I'D PULL THE TRIGGER.
STAY WITH ME !
DON'T DEPEND ON ME, DEUNAN.
QUICK!
I HAVE TO SHOOT OUT THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT BEFORE I LOSE CONTROL OF MY FINGERS-- **YOU** CAN'T FIRE MY 20mm, AND YOUR **COLT** IS TOO SMALL FOR MY HAND.

TIK TIK TIK
DRAINING THE TIME!
SEGENDA
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
THEY'RE NOT IN BALANCE, THOSE GIANT SCALES
A UTOPIA DESIGNED FOR THE UTOPIAN SELF...
A PERFECTLY CONSTRUCTED TOY
TO WHAT END...?
FOR WHO?
TIK TIK TIK
TIK TIK

HURRY U-
EEEK!
BAM BAM
SPAK
SPAK
BAM

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